

NARRATIVE

OR THE
ORDINARY of NEWGATE's ACCOUNT

Of what passed between him and

James Sheppard ;

Who was Try'd and Convicted, and received Sentence
of Death for High-Treason, at Justice-Hall in the
Old-Bailly, on Thursday the 6th, and Executed at Tyburn
on Monday last, being the 17th Instant.

JAMES SHEPPARD, condemn'd for High-Treason in imagining and compassing the Death of His Most Sacred Majesty King GEORGE. He said, he was under 18 Years of Age, born in the Parish of St. Saviour, Southwark: That when very young, his Father dying, he was left to the Care of an Uncle of his, who provided for his Education, and put him to a Latin-School at Salisbury, where he was about 3 Years, and afterwards coming up to London, was bound Apprentice to a Coach-Painter in this City, with whom he had liv'd about 14 Months when apprehended. As to the horrid Crime he stood condemn'd for, he said, That by the reading of certain Sermons and other Books he had learnt, That He whom we call Our King, had no Right to the Crown of England, and so he was fully perswaded, that the Killing of Him would be a good and commendable thing; and from that time (which is about 3 Years ago) he had a mighty Impulse upon his Heart that he must be the Person that should do the Deed, namely Assassinate King GEORGE in his own Palace, and by this Means make Way for the Right Heir, as he call'd the Pretender. When he had thus declar'd his detestable Intention to me, and withal added, That he verily believ'd it was a Motion that came from GOD to his Soul; I then told him, That as such an Intent was most wicked, the most horrid Thought that ever could enter into the Heart of Man; so (considering the Nature of it) he should have concluded it rather to be (as it really was) an Impulse or Suggestion from the Devil, who had seduced him, and led him to this Unparallel'd Wickedness; for no other End or Purpose than to bring a general Calamity upon this Protestant Nation and Destruction upon his own Soul in particular: That if he had taken the Pains to weigh the Matter well, he would have discover'd it was so, and have understood, that the Law implanted by Nature in every Man's Heart, the Moral Law, and the Divine Law (reveald in Holy Scripture) expressly forbid Murder in general, much more such (particularly) as that he would have committed, which speaks Horrour to Humane Nature, as being a Crime of the greatest Magnitude, and by all Laws and the Sense of all Civiliz'd Nations punishable in the most exemplary manner; whereof he might be now convinc'd, if he would but submit himself to be directed by the Word of GOD, who (in the Sixth Commandment) expressly says, *Thou shalt do no Murder*; a Command press'd more still upon us Christians by our Blessed Saviour in his Gospel. Which makes it appear, That though the

Prince he would have murder'd in that treacherous manner, were but a private Person, yet the Thought of Killing him, would have been an heinous Crime. Many Arguments I us'd with him, in order to convince him (if possible) of his Damnable Error, and undeceive his poor deluded Soul; but he would hearken to none. I told him, That as he had had (since this inhumane Thought came into his Mind) a long time; so he had Leisure and Opportunity to consider the heinous Nature, and the dismal Consequences of it, and also might have apprehended that by it he would become his own Murderer, a Crime that scarce admits of Hope for Pardon; and upon that he shou'd have pray'd for Grace, to the end he might have such wicked Cogitations remov'd from his Heart. To all this he reply'd, That he did pray; and, That by how much he pray'd, by so much the more he was encourag'd and confirm'd in the Lawfulness of his Design. Then said I to him, Your Prayers, I suppose, were not, That GOD would please to inform your Judgment better; but probably you pray'd for Success in your design'd Bloody Enterprize: But now, that you see your self disappointed in it, and not only so, but must shamefully lose your Life for it, I hope you may be satisfied, that GOD did not approve of it, and had not sent you upon such an Errand; for if he had, he would have prospered it, and you should not have perished in the Attempt; the Thing should not (as it has) miscarried in your Hand: Which ill Success that you have had therein, one would think, should be a mighty convincing Argument to you, that such an unheard-of Contrivance was wicked and abominable to the highest degree: And so I would have you take it to heart, and duly consider it; and let Reason and Religion here be admitted, that by the true Use of them you may perceive, and be convinc'd, and repent of your unparallel'd Error and loud-crying Sin, have your Heart melted and purify'd, and cry out with those Penitents mention'd in the Scripture, *I have sinned; And what shall I do to thee, O thou Preserver of Men, and Judge of the whole World? What shall I do to be sav'd? Have mercy upon me, O Lord, after thy great Goodness; according to the multitude of thy tender Compassions; blot out all my Offences: Wash me thoroughly from my Wickedness, and cleanse me from my Sin.—Deliver me from Blood-guiltiness, O God, Thou that art the God of my Health, and my Tongue shall sing of thy Righteousness, &c.* Thus I laid before him both his great Duty and Interest, yea, his Everlasting Concern, desiring him to have a due Regard thereto

The Place where I was sometimes discoursing with him (*viz.* at the Hatchdoor that leads to the Dungeon or Condemn'd Hold in the Lodge) being very noisy and incommodious, by reason of People's crowding to hear what I said to him, and he to me, I found then I could not work much good on him there, and therefore with'd he would give me an Opportunity of speaking with him in private; but he would not consent to it, saying, *He durst not trust himself with me.* "Why (said I) am I such a Monster, or a Man so dreadful? No (reply'd he) but I am afraid of your Arguments: I am not a Scholar good enough to answer you." Very well (said I) if you have not so much Understanding as I, why will you not take my Advice, and that too in a Matter of so great moment, and in which it infinitely concerns you to be rightly inform'd? I will not puzzle you with such Arguments as may be beyond your Capacity to understand; there is no need of that; but only I would endeavour to make you sensible, that the Thing you were contriving being most base and abominable, it could by no means proceed from God, who hates Wickedness, but from the great Seducer and Enemy of Mankind, who (as the Apostle tells us) works mightily in the Children of Disobedience, deceiving their Hearts, and raising in them all manner of inordinate Affections, and evil Concupiscence, &c. for which things sake cometh the Wrath of God upon them; and, That (as I had observ'd to him before) he should not have met with such a Disappointment in his Purpose, if God (as he asserted) had given him a Commission, and commanded him to go about such a thing. To this he answer'd, *That his being thus disappointed did not proceed from the Illegality of the Fact, but from some Sins (he would not tell what) he had otherwise committed.* But I told him, This was the Sin chiefly that had brought him under God's Wrath and Indignation, and to this shameful and untimely Death in this World; which he ought to take care might not be follow'd by an Eternal Punishment in the next. And here going on, I ask'd him these plain Questions: Did you never reflect upon the heinousness of that Fact you would have committed? Had you no Dread, no Horror upon you? Did you feel no Remorse, no Throws of Conscience at the thoughts of it, at any time? No, said he, but on the contrary, I was very well pleas'd all along, and very easie in my Mind. Then (reply'd I to him) you must be stupify'd and harden'd in Sin to the extreamest degree: The Lord have Mercy on you, and give you a Sight of your dangerous State, and take you out of it. Then I advis'd him to examine himself, as upon the Whole, so in this Particular (especially) *viz.* Whether Pride, which is the Sin of the Devil, had not a great share in that his Diabolical Device; and, whether he did not mightily please himself in this Thought, That hereafter he should be admir'd by some, who would praise him, and extol his Courage to the Sky, for having done *That* which no other durst attempt to do; for doubtless that must be his Ambition, and Self Conceit, mixt with an evil Disposition and other bad Qualities in him? To which he answer'd, *It was not so; but only the Sense of his Duty to His King prompted him to it; and, That tho' himself had not, yet he knew another who would have done it, if he had liv'd; but he dy'd a few days since;* which he seem'd to be very sorry for. Who that execrable Person was, and whether he knew any other of this Devilish Temper, he would not, and said he should never, tell: But of such, if such Monsters there be in the World, I must and will say this, and heartily wish it, *Except they repent, let them all likewise perish.* Some time after this I had another Discourse with that unhappy Assassine and obdurate Sinner, who may be said to be another * James Clement, a second John Chastel, a Ravilliac, a blind Devoted Agent in the Devil's Cause, most tenacious to his pernicious Principles, which were so fix'd upon him, that I, and I believe some others that saw him, found it next to impossible, by what Man could do, to remove them from him; who had a Prejudice against all Orthodox Divines, and 'tis pity any other were suffer'd to come to him and confirm him in his Evil Disposition.

Things being so, and he in that desperate Case, all I could do, was to pray (as I did) That God would vouchsafe to take pity of him; to enlighten his dark Mind, and purify his Affections by his holy Spirit; to deliver him from this miserable State of Error and Sin; to rescue him out of the Snares, and from under the Tyranny and Slavery of Satan, and admit him into the glorious Liberty of his blessed Children. Thus I went on with him, using all possible Endeavours to mollifie his stony Heart, and bring it into a better Frame. And to shew him that this strange Opinion he had rashly and inconsiderately espous'd, was not the Opinion of all the Non-jurors, I instanc'd in the worthy Person to whom he apply'd himself for his Furtherance in this bloody Act, who was so far from complying with it, that he look'd upon it as an horrible and detestable thing; and so thought himself oblig'd in Conscience to put a Stop to it, by discovering it, and bringing him (the wretched Author of it) to Justice. And now (said I) why should you, a young Man as you are, who have not that Experience in Things (especially those relating to Publick Government) which they of a longer standing in the World, and larger Capacities than your self, may reasonably be suppos'd to have? Why should such a one as you think himself more knowing and more religious than other Men; to excel in Goodness and Wisdom even those you have Reason to think well of? Why should you be so self-conceited and so presumptuous, as to fancy that what you thought to be wrong might and must be rectified by you, and you must put your own Life upon it? How could you be satisfied in the Rectitude of those Thoughts of yours that were so strange, and so monstrous? To these Questions he gave me this short Answer: *I am satisfied I was in the right;* adding, *That he had not alter'd his Mind in the Matter, nor ever would alter it;* and, *That if it were in his Power, he would still kill Him whom we own for our King, or any Friends of his.* Wou'd you? said I, but (God be prais'd) your Hands are ty'd; the Lord convert your Heart. And, continued I, would you have kill'd the late Queen? To this he reply'd, *I had not these Thoughts when she was alive; but if she were so now, I would kill her.* Which Expression he repeated two or three times, to the Amazement of all that heard him: But when he saw how People about him, among whom I believe were some of his Friends, were strangely surprized and seiz'd with Horrour at such an Expression, he said, *Perhaps I would not have done it, because she was a Woman, who govern'd not her self, but Others did it for her.* Then, said I to him, look you to it; there is another Life after this, in which you must account for all your Faults: There is a Lake of Brimstone, a Worm that dies not, and a Fire which shall never be quench'd: There are intolerable Torments for all Regicides, and all Murderers and other Sinners, that carry the Guilt of their Sins unrepented of into another World: And therefore I must plainly tell you, *That will be your dismal Portion there for ever, unless you truly repent here in time.*

I found somebody had been tempering with, and hardning him in his wicked Principles, which I thought before were peculiar to himself, and that none was so blind and so inhumane, as to be altogether of his Sentiments; for one Morning hearing he was in a private Room, and a Clergyman with him, I desir'd to go and see him; which at first was deny'd me, but afterwards granted, tho' not without some Difficulty; and seeing two Men then with the Prisoner, I first address'd myself to one of them, who was in the Habit of a Divine of the Church of England. Of whom I ask'd, *How he found this poor unhappy young Man?* and, *Whether he repented?* He answer'd, *That he found him in a very good State:* To which I said, *I rejoice at it, and bless GOD for it.* And then turning to the Young man himself, I said to him, Now you must give Glory to GOD, and acknowledge your Faults; that especially for which you now lie under this sad Condemnation. Hold there, cry'd out that Priest, or Jesuit, or Wolf in Sheeps-cloathing, *I am his Father-confessor, and he and I are of the same Communion, and you are not.* What! reply'd

* See the Account of those Regicides in Mezeray's Hist. of France.

ply'd I to him, Are you of that Communion which holds it lawful for Men to murder Princes for Equity in a most treacherous and execrable Manner? I wonder you are not asham'd on't. Then he went on, saying, *I am in Communion with him, and what is fit to be said to him, he shall receive from me, and none but me, who am his proper Confessor; and he shall give you no Account of himself, nor no Answer to any Question you shall ask him.* Strange! said I, May not I, the Minister and Ordinary of this Place, have as much Liberty to ask Questions of a Prisoner here, as you pretend to have? Methinks you are very rude and unmannerly.

But I will ask him, and so I did ask him again, Whether or no he still persisted in this Opinion, That it was lawful for him to murder the King, or Any-body else? Pray speak your Mind, freely said I: But he answer'd nothing. Then I turning to that pretended Confessor or Director of his Soul, said to him, This Silence is the Effect of your bidding him not to answer me in any thing. But I will take the Liberty to ask you your self a Question or two, Do you think him in a good State to entertain such a wicked traiterous Imagination as that of killing King George is? Do you not think he ought to repent of it?

These were Questions I successively put to him; who instead of giving me a distinct Answer to each of them, as he should have done, was pleas'd only to afford me these few Words; *I have nothing to say to You.* But, reply'd I, I have something more to say to you my self: I will ask you this other Question; Answer me. Do you not think in your Conscience, that he ought publicly to confess this horrid Crime, and beg Pardon for it? No, said he; and with that went away as fast as he could, the Door being open, and after him the Prisoner, whom I was not at Liberty then to discourse by himself so much as one Moment longer. But the next Day having Leave given me (which one would think I should always have had) to speak with him, I accordingly went to the Room appointed for my seeing him. There I found him, and his foremention'd Father-Confessor with his Assistant. After some previous Words of Civility, I said, I was come to speak to this poor Young-man; and so I did: But as that Priest then told me, so I found, That he would not give me any Answer to the Questions I put to him, which were, Whether he had impartially consider'd the heinous Fact he would have committed; and, Whether he now abhor'd it, and repented of it? As he would not, nor did he give me any Answer to these Queries; so I pray'd that Confessor of his to exhort him, and give him his Opinion in the Matter, before me: But he said, *He would not do it, and what he had to say to him, he would not say it in my Presence; neither was the Prisoner (as he told me before) obliged to satisfy me in those Things I demanded of him; for I was not his proper Priest; I was not of his Communion, which he often repeated.* Have you said all, reply'd I to him: Pray hear what the Apostle says, He tells us, That *We are always to be ready to give an Answer to every Man that asketh a Reason of the Hope that is in us, with Meekness and Fear* And why may not I, to whom this poor deluded Youth has, before now, declar'd, more than once, That the Killing of the King was a lawful and commendable Action; and, That it was to be done, and done by him too? Why may not I ask him, as I here do, Whether he be still of the same Opinion? And what Reason he can alledge for it? To this he said, *You have nothing to do with him, nor he with You.* Well then, said I, Pray ask him the Question your self. I, reply'd he, will ask him no Question, nor give him any Admonition while You are here. If so, said I, Pray, Sir, withdraw: Seeing you will not advise him before me to purge his Conscience, nor let me speak to him without your interrupting me, I desire both you and your Assistant to give me leave to try what Good I can work upon him, when he and I are alone: Whereupon they, tho' very unwillingly, withdrew a little out of the Door, which was left open all the while. And then having the Prisoner to my self, I ask'd him these Questions again: Whether he now persisted

in his former Opinion, as he had declar'd it to me, *That it was lawful for him, and he had a Commission from God to assassinate the King?* Whether, yea or no, he had been here instructed by his Confessor, that this was a great and dangerous Mistake? and, Whether he now retract'd and repented of it?

To this he would give me no manner Answer: Yet I still endeavour'd to inform and rectify his Judgment; and I ask't him also, Whether I might pray then with him; but he said, *I should not.* And upon my further asking him, Whether he desir'd my private or publick Prayers, and the Prayers of the Church, as People under Condemnation generally do? He answer'd, *That he desir'd their Prayers only, who were of his own Communion.* So I left him, telling him at parting, I was sorry to see him in that evil and obstinate Disposition; and, That notwithstanding his rejecting my Advice and Prayers, I heartily recommended him to the Guidance of God's Holy Spirit and Mercy, and would pray for his Soul whether he desir'd it or no, so long as he liv'd. Then I withdrew from him; and as I was going out of the Room his Confessor who was ready at the Door, presently and eagerly came in again, and shew'd himself very rude and impudent to me; but I lookt upon it as an Effect of his blind misguided Zeal, who hated and oppos'd me, only because I was for King GEORGE, and the Protestant Religion: But let him and all his Party know, That I will venture the Loss of all things, yea, Life it self, for His Majesty and the Royal Family's Service and Interest, and for the Truth of the Gospel: And I care not for what Sland'rous Tongues can say, who are given to Lies, and neither fear GOD, nor Honour the KING.

To this Paper (tho' pretty long already) I shall add, That as I was last Saturday at Prayer in the Chappel at Newgate, observing abundance of People went through, when I had done my Office there (and that not without great disturbance) I enquir'd what the matter was; and one telling me that they were going to see James Sheppard, who was in a Room beyond the Chappel, I went along with them, and spoke to that poor unhappy Creature, but he would not hear my Arguments, nor receive my Admonitions; neither would he promise to come to hear me preach the next day in the Chapel, to which his Room was near. He said, *He was still of the same Mind he had declar'd before, and would ever continue so.*

And here I must not omit to observe, That two of the Under Turnkeys that were in the Room when I went in to speak to Sheppard, did both of them use me very impudently, swore great Oaths at me, and said, That they had Order to keep me from him. Who gave them that unreasonable Order they best know, and I hope some time or other they will be made to tell.

The Morning he was to be carried to Tyburn I was call'd to see him in his Room: There I again exhorted and interrogated him, as I had done before, but he would not hear me, nor give me any Answer, turning his Back to me all the while. And this he did at the Place of Execution, where his Priest (who has sufficiently shewn his Opposition to the Government, and also insulted me in Newgate) both interrupted me in my Office, and confirm'd him in his Errour: So that when he was withdrawn, even then this poor deluded Creature would not so much as let me pray for him. Nevertheless I used My best Endeavours (as late as that was) to undeceive him, and bring him to a due Consideration of his lamentable Condition; but he remain'd obstinate, being so far fixt in his Erroneous Principles, that nothing (I found) could make him depart from them.

them. And all this Calamity (I may say) is owing to the free Admittance that Person had to him, who even at the Gallows had the Presumption to give him Publick Absolution, tho' he visibly dy'd without Repentance.

N. B. Those that have already reflected, or may hereafter reflect upon the Justice of this Malefactor's Sentence; saying, He was Lunatick, and therefore ought not to have been condemn'd to die; let them ask his Father-Confessor, (who daily visited him, and gave him the Sacrament) Whether (as they pretend, and endeavour to persuade the World) he was Lunatick, or not.

During the time he lay in the Condemn'd Hole, where he was put in at first, he shew'd one

or two of his Last Speeches to his Fellow-Prisoners there, and told them, That he had another (made by one of his Bishops) which was That he intended should be printed: But whether it be the same he deliver'd at the Tree, I think it not worth the Enquiry.

Wednesday
March 19.
1717-18.

This is the Melancholy Account I am here to give of this miserable Assassine. That there may be no more such, is the Prayer of

Paul Lorrain, *Ordinary*.

DUBLIN: Re-printed by Thomas Hume, 1718.

*FEC7.L8935.718nb

THE HOUGHTON LIBRARY

5 August 1938

Harvard College Library
Kittredge Fund
August 5, 1938.